

THE OFFICE ACTION

In the Office Action, the Examiner has required restriction of the above-identified application to one of the following inventions under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- Group I: Claims 1-9, 26-37, 63, and 66-68, drawn to a cross-linked polysaccharide, classified in class 527, subclass 217.
- Group II: Claims 10-25, 38-61, drawn to a process for preparation of a polysaccharide using formula 2, classified in class 435, subclass 97.
- Group III: Claim 62, drawn to a process for preparation of a polysaccharide using formula 1, classified in class 435, subclass 72.
- Group IV: Claims 64-65, drawn to an absorbent, classified in class 502, subclass 159.
- Group V: Claim 69, drawn to the use of a polysaccharide, classified in class 424, subclass 70.

REMARKS

The Requirement of Restriction

Applicants wish to elect to prosecute the invention of Group I (Claims 1-9, 26-37, 63, and 66-68, drawn to a cross-linked polysaccharide).

Applicants have amended claim 69 of Group V and submit that, as amended, claim 69 should be prosecuted within Group I, that is claims 1-9, 26-37, 63, and 66-68 drawn to a cross-linked polysaccharide. Indeed, claim 69 is no longer drawn to the use of a polysaccharide but rather to a mixture comprising an effective amount of a polysaccharide. In addition, the term "telecommunication cable wrappings (for non-biodegradable polymer)" has been removed from

amended claim 69. Applicants submit that these claims are now drawn to a single inventive concept and do not require further searching when combined.

Applicants affirm their election made to prosecute the invention of Group I claims 9, 26-37, 63, and 66-68, but applicants respectfully submit that the requirement of restriction on Group V should be withdrawn in view of the amendment made to claim 69 thereof. Applicants argue that a search of the art relative to the product claims would uncover the relevant art to the mixture claim and, accordingly, it would not constitute a burden upon the Office to examine the claims of Group I and Group V (as herein amended) at once. Applicants should not be put to the extra cost of filing fees and other prosecution expenses that would be associated with a divisional application directed to the provisionally non-elected group (Group V).

The Amended Claims

Claim 69 has been amended based upon page 9 of the specification to more specifically claim Applicants' invention. The term "telecommunication cable wrappings (for non-biodegradable polymer)" has been removed from amended claim 69.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application in light of the above comments. Applicants submit that all claims are patentable over the art of record. If there are any issues remaining, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned in an attempt to resolve any such issues.

Application No. 10/044,846
Amendment dated September 15, 2003
Reply to Office Action of May 15, 2003

If any fee is due in conjunction with the filing of this Response, Applicants authorize deduction of that fee from Deposit Account 06-0308.

Respectfully submitted,

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